

Inspection of Smithy Bridge Foundation Primary School

Bridgenorth Drive, Littleborough OL15 0ES

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school strives to achieve the mission statement to encourage all pupils to be confident, aim high and be happy in all aspects of school life. This is clear in the high ambitions that the school has for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils make the most of the learning opportunities that the school provides for them. Many pupils leave the school well prepared for their next stage of education.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which are reflected in the new behaviour policy. Many pupils are kind, considerate and take pride in being part of the school community. Pupils who need extra help to manage their emotions are supported well by staff. Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They highlight their trust in staff as an important reason for this.

The school provides pupils with a broad range of opportunities that bring the curriculum to life. Pupils visit other schools as part of their learning about celebrations in different cultures. Multicultural festivals are celebrated at the school. Pupils also visit different places of worship. These activities help them to build up a secure understanding of the world's religions and cultures.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The majority of the school's curriculum has been carefully organised from the Nursery Year through to the end of key stage 2. Across most subjects, the school has identified the key knowledge that pupils should learn and when this should be taught. However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum does not set out all of the important knowledge that pupils should learn. This prevents teachers from designing learning that builds up pupils' knowledge over time.

The school provides teachers with appropriate training. This helps them to develop their subject knowledge. It also helps teachers to identify and support effectively the additional needs of pupils with SEND. The school has strategies in place to enable teachers to check on what pupils have learned and remembered from previous lessons. When needed, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to revisit prior concepts before moving on to new learning. Overall, many pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well.

To support pupils' learning at home, the school engages well with parents and carers to ensure that they have the information that they need. For example, parents benefit from workshops about phonics, reading and grammar.

Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes are skilled at supporting children's language development. In the early years and key stage 1, staff deliver the phonics programme consistently. They quickly identify pupils who need extra help with phonics. Timely support from staff helps these pupils to keep up with their classmates. The books that pupils read closely match the sounds that they have

learned. Many pupils become fluent and confident readers by the end of key stage 1.

Pupils in key stage 2 regularly read a range of high-quality texts, which include novels and non-fiction. The books that pupils read are written by a variety of authors from different countries. Through these books, pupils learn about a range of important topical issues. This helps them to develop their sense of empathy and understanding.

Children in the early years quickly learn the school's rules and routines. For example, they listen carefully to staff and cooperate well with their classmates. Most pupils across the school are attentive in lessons and keen to learn. Lessons generally proceed without disruption. However, some staff do not reinforce the high expectations of behaviour that the school has. This impacts on how well some pupils behave and follow school routines.

All pupils, including those with SEND, experience a broad range of opportunities that enhance their personal development. Pupils develop a deep and meaningful understanding of fundamental British values, such as the rule of law. Pupils are clear that they should treat everyone with respect, regardless of their differences. They understand how to keep themselves safe online. Crafts, multisports and science clubs help pupils to further develop their talents and interests.

Governors have a secure understanding of the school. They provide effective support and challenge linked to the quality of education. Staff value being part of the school. They appreciate the consideration and actions taken that help support their workload and well-being. Staff also value the training that they receive to help them deliver the curriculum well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the school has not identified the key knowledge that pupils from the early years to Year 6 should learn. This prevents teachers from designing learning that builds up pupils' knowledge over time. The school should ensure that it finalises its curriculum thinking in these areas, so that pupils can build on prior knowledge when they learn something new.
- Some staff do not reinforce the high expectations of behaviour that the school has. This impacts on how well some pupils behave and follow school routines. The school should ensure that high expectations of behaviour are consistently communicated by staff and modelled by pupils.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	105847
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10242362
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	424
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Terry Allen
Headteacher	Antonia Firth
Website	www.sbs.rochdale.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 February 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher both took up their posts in September 2023.
- The governing body operates a breakfast club and after-school provision.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, music, physical education and science. As part of the deep dives,

the inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited lessons, met with teachers and looked at pupils' work. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum and pupils' work in some other subjects. The lead inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They also considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online staff survey.
- The inspectors spoke with some parents. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Robinson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Joanna Atherton	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Kirkpatrick	Ofsted Inspector

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